

Outdoor Cooking Requirements for Food Establishments

Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet #24

The following requirements shall be followed with regards to outdoor cooking.

1. The only food preparation activity authorized under these requirements shall be cooking (i.e. grilling preformed meats or cuts of meat). Hot holding shall be limited to what can be held on the cooking unit. All other activities shall be conducted in the permit holders licensed food establishment. **Food safety will not be allowed to be compromised by the authorization of more complicated food processes or food handling in an outdoor environment.**
2. Only the licensee of a food establishment in full compliance with the Wisconsin food Code may conduct an outdoor cooking operation. The cooking must be conducted on the premise of the licensed food establishment as defined by the Wisconsin Food Code.
3. The purpose for outdoor cooking shall not be to increase production capability of the food establishment by circumventing codes applicable to indoor cooking facilities. *(If the indoor facility is not capable of preparing the same food that is served outdoors, then outdoor cooking will not be permitted, unless a temporary food establishment permit is issued for that operation.)*
The exception being that a retail food establishment may conduct outdoor cooking on premise as part of an occasional sales promotion.
NOTE: A Limited Food Establishment as defined in the Wisconsin Food Code does not meet the requirements for outdoor cooking.
4. The outdoor cooker may not be made from a container previously used for toxic material storage.
5. The outdoor grill must be effectively cleaned prior to use and the entire unit must be in good repair.
6. The outdoor cooking area must be free of dust, dirt, or other contaminants. Washed gravel, grass, concrete, asphalt, etc., is acceptable around the cooking area.
7. The cooking area shall be effectively separated from the public.
8. All utensils used for outdoor cooking shall be washed, rinsed and sanitized in the licensed food establishment before and after use. The ware wash equipment shall meet the Wisconsin Food Code requirements for utensil washing.
9. The food establishment shall provide evidence of approval from the local zoning or building inspection authority to operate an outdoor cooking operation.
10. The food establishment must be able to support the activities of outside grilling by complying with Commerce codes regarding grease traps, restroom requirements, ventilation requirements, etc. Outdoor grilling is not an alternative to meeting indoor facility requirements.
11. There must be adequate space and facilities in the licensed food establishment to safely prepare and hold any additional food from the outdoor cooking operation.
12. A convenient handwashing facility shall be provided. At a minimum, a covered 5-gallon container equipped with a valve or spigot that allows a continual flow of water over the hands shall be provided. Also, a waste receptacle shall be provided to collect the wastewater from handwashing. Water should be hot or tempered. Adequate supplies of soap and single use paper towels must also be provided.
13. All Charcoal/wood ash shall be cooled and disposed of according to code requirements.